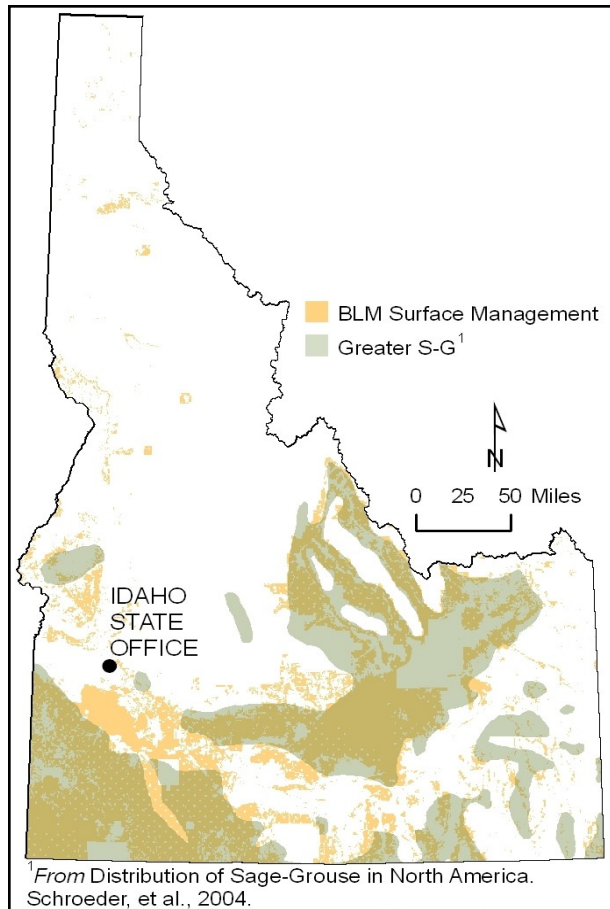


BLM-Idaho

Sage-grouse Conservation Efforts

Sage-grouse conservation efforts in Idaho include collaborative restoration projects, surveys, research, and monitoring on Federal, State, private, and Tribal lands using a variety of funding sources. Under the BLM Healthy Landscapes program, many important sage-grouse habitat restoration and protection activities, including juniper control, shrub steppe restoration, and fuel breaks, have been implemented on BLM-administered land in Idaho.

Partnerships are essential in BLM-Idaho's sage-grouse conservation efforts. One such partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) is identifying and implementing actions that benefit elk, sage-grouse, and other wildlife in southwestern Idaho. BLM-Idaho has the lead role in coordinating the annual update to the broad-scale Idaho sage-grouse habitat planning map. These updates are based on the past-season's wildfire occurrences and changes resulting from habitat management actions or vegetation succession. BLM-Idaho is also working with IDFG to draft a map of "core" sage-grouse areas. Modeled after Wyoming and Montana efforts, this map will aid in project siting and mitigation planning.



Twelve Sage-grouse Planning Areas are recognized in Idaho, encompassing the State's 9.4 million acres of key sage-grouse habitat, of which BLM-Idaho administers over 60 percent. In October 2009, a subcommittee of the multi-jurisdictional Idaho Sage-grouse Advisory Committee completed a major revision of the implementation strategy (*Ch. 6 - Implementation Milestones*) of the July 2006 *Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho (2006 Plan)*. The 2006 Plan replaced the original 1997 plan with significant new information, including Local Working Group (LWG) plans. The LWGs, in which BLM-Idaho participates, have been updating LWG planning boundaries and mapping sage-grouse seasonal habitats. Seven of the LWGs have completed or are nearing completion of plans, one of which is completing a "Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances" so that future conservation obligations on private lands will not exceed those agreed to. BLM continues to provide \$60,000 annually to IDFG to support sage-grouse data management and coordination, and habitat restoration planning.



In November 2008, BLM-Idaho issued the “Policy Statement on the Implementation of the Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho” (Instruction Memorandum 2009-006) that clarifies field office and district use of the *2006 Plan* on public lands in Idaho. It includes direction to: 1) use the *2006 Plan* and LWG plans as applicable in the development of Resource Management Plans; 2) apply appropriate conservation measures from the *2006 Plan* and LWG plans to BLM actions; 3) avoid use of NEPA Categorical Exclusions for tall structure proposals (power lines, meteorological towers, communications towers, etc.) due to uncertainty of effects on sage-grouse; 4) provide for a two-mile buffer around active leks when placing new temporary meteorological towers and required flagging of guy wires; and 5) reduce sage-grouse fence collision risk through appropriate new fence analyses.

